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LETTER DATED 8 JANUARY 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ETHIOPIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instruction from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 6 January 1997 addressed to you by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, H.E. Mr. Seyoum Mesfin, and its appendices, concerning the High-level Consultative Meeting of the Somali factions held at Sodere, Ethiopia.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Duri MOHAMMED
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

97-00393 (E) 090197 100197

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Annex

Letter dated 6 January 1997 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia addressed to the President of the Security Council

I write to you in connection with the process of national reconciliation in Somalia which has received a major boost as a result of the significant agreement reached among the major Somali faction leaders here in Ethiopia.

After more than eight weeks of intensive consultation and negotiation, the leaders of the various Somali factions, apart from Mr. Hussein Aidid who did not take part in the meeting despite repeated approaches made to him, have agreed to set up a 41-member National Salvation Council of Somalia, led by an 11-member Executive Committee, with responsibilities, inter alia, for peace and stability as well as for the preparatory work for the establishment of a Transitional Central Authority (TCA) or a Provisional National Government.

In view of the concern of the international community and the Security Council with regard to the conflict situation in Somalia, I felt it necessary that members of the Security Council be updated on this latest positive development in Somalia which requires the strong support of the Security Council and the United Nations, in general.

It is my view, as stated in the opening address I gave at the inaugural ceremony on the establishment of the National Salvation Council, that this newly created mood for compromise and give and take by the Somali faction leaders should be encouraged by the international community so that this momentum for peace will not be lost. Accordingly, it is now time for the United Nations and members of the international community to come out in very concrete terms in support of the people of Somalia.

As members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), we are determined, in close coordination and collaboration and on the basis of the mechanism that we have put in place for this purpose, to continue to do whatever is necessary for peace and national reconciliation in Somalia. We hope, in this regard, that the Security Council will do the maximum possible to ensure that there is meaningful and effective consultation between the Security Council and the IGAD countries on the question of Somalia.

It is in this same spirit that I am writing to inform you about the latest development in connection with the peace process in Somalia. Therefore, I ask you to please find enclosed herewith the Declaration issued on 3 January 1997 by the High-level Consultative Meeting of the Somali factions and other pertinent documents, including the copy of the opening address I made at the ceremony making the setting-up of the National Salvation Council. I wish to request you to have all these documents circulated as documents of the Security Council.

(Signed) Seyoum MESFIN
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Appendix I

Declaration of national pledges and commitments, adopted on 3 January 1997 by the High-level Consultative Meeting of Somali Political Movements, held at Sodere, Ethiopia

We the delegates, participants of the High-level Consultative Meeting at Sodere, Ethiopia, representing the Somali political movements, signatories of the agreement reached at Sodere to establish the National Salvation Council, hereby solemnly declare by this act our full commitment and pledge:

1. To fully respect the principles and objectives of the National Salvation Council and abide by the provisions contained therein;

2. To serve the aspirations of the Somali people for peace, reconciliation and development;

3. To reaffirm the unity, national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Somalia;

4. To work collectively for the enhancement of the dignity of the Somali people and to restore a climate of mutual trust and of self-confidence among all our people;

5. To foster collectively the spirit of brotherhood and social harmony in all spheres of life throughout our beloved country;

6. To promote the cultural values and age-old traditional wisdom and tolerance of Somali society;

7. To reaffirm our deep attachment to the Islamic faith, teachings and moral values;

8. To devote ourselves to the safeguarding of fundamental democratic principles and human rights;

9. To place national interest above clan selfishness, personal greed and ambition;

10. To work with determination and resoluteness for the revival of our nation and its renaissance;

11. To encourage all efforts directed towards peace and reconciliation among Somali communities;

12. To oppose and resist all forms of terrorism and foreign-inspired disruptive forces;

13. To pay homage to all those compatriots who sacrificed themselves and paid the ultimate price for the sake of peace and national salvation, to remember them as heroes of the Somali people;

14. To promote friendly relations with all nations and actively to pursue a policy of good-neighbourliness and mutual cooperation with the member countries of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

Signed by all the Somali political leaders participating in the High-level Consultative Meeting held at Sodere, Ethiopia

1. Somali Afrikans Muki Organization/Somali Salvation Alliance
(Signed) Mohamed Ramadan Arbow
Chairman

2. Somali Democratic Alliance/Somali Salvation Alliance
(Signed) Ali Haji Hersi
Chairman

3. Somali Democratic Movement/Bonkai
(Signed) Abdulahi Mohamed Idris "Lesto"
Acting Chairman

4. Somali Democratic Movement/Somali National Alliance
(Signed) Issaq Malaq Ibrahim
Chairman

5. Somali Democratic Movement/Rahanwein Resistence Army
(Signed) Hassan Mohamed Nur
Chairman

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(Signed) Osman Roble Mohamud
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(Signed) Osman Hassan Ali, Ato
Chairman

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(Signed) Abdi Osman Farah
Acting Chairman

22. United Somali Congress/Somali Salvation Alliance
(Signed) Ali Mahdi Mohamed
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23. United Somali Congress/Upper Jubba
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(Signed) Ahmed Gure Adan
Chairman

26. United Somali Party/Somali Salvation Alliance
(Signed) Mohamed Abdi Hashi
Chairman

27. USR
(Signed) Mohamud Hussein Farah
Chairman

Appendix II

Opening statement by Mr. Ato Seyoum Mesfin, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, at the inaugural ceremony of the formation of the National Salvation Council of Somalia, on 3 January 1997

On behalf of the member States of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and of our Somali brothers, whose achievement is the reason for this gathering, and on my own behalf, I have great pleasure in welcoming you to this inaugural ceremony heralding the formation of the National Salvation Council by our Somali brothers, who have been engaged in an intensive consultation for more than eight weeks here in Ethiopia.

This is indeed a major achievement by those who took part in this High-level Consultative Meeting of the various factions in Somalia. We would, of course, have been even more gratified if some who did not participate in this process had taken part in the Meeting, which, without doubt, has been the most important, the most inclusive and the most intensive consultation that the various Somali factions have had since 1993.

I wish to make it very clear here that we, on our part, and the IGAD countries as a whole, have made all the necessary efforts to ensure that all Somali factions would be represented in this process. It is to be recalled that, as a prelude to the commencement of the High-level Consultative Meeting, we had, from August to October 1996, a series of consultations here in Addis Ababa and at other venues, with the representatives of virtually all Somali factions. Subsequently, we extended invitations to all, without exception, to come to Addis Ababa for high-level consultations among the Somali factions. All but the representatives of Mr. Hussein Aidid eventually came to Addis Ababa and the high-level consultations started two months ago at the resort site of Sodere.

Those of us who have closely followed the deliberations of the High-level Consultative Meeting are witnesses to the seriousness with which the consultations were conducted and to the spirit of give and take that has characterized the Meeting. In fact, it was indeed a Meeting where the interests of the Somali people as a whole were given precedence over sectarian and individual interests. This is what has made the Meeting at Sodere so different and so unique compared to all the previous formal or informal consultations that the various Somali factions have had over the past six years. Our Somali friends know full well, better than anyone else, why I say this and what lies behind the emphasis I give to what has been achieved at Sodere in terms of the renunciation of individual interests in favour of the common good. It is therefore our confidence that this spirit will continue and that this process will lay the foundation, brick by brick, for the realization of national reconciliation in Somalia and for the establishment of an all-inclusive Government in that country.

It is not my responsibility to go into the details of what has been achieved by our Somali brothers and by the High-level Consultative Meeting. This is essentially a task to be carried out by the actors themselves, which I

suppose they will do in due course. But let me say a few words about the general approach that we in IGAD have followed to assist in this process.

All those who have followed closely the peace efforts in Somalia over the past six years will recall that the IGAD countries have always insisted on strict adherence to the principle that the search for peace and national reconciliation is primarily the responsibility of the Somalis themselves and that the role of others, including that of the regional countries, is to assist their effort. This has also been one of the principles by which we have been guided in facilitating the work that has been undertaken by the High-level Consultative Meeting.

It might be useful to recall that the insistence on and the unequivocal acceptance of the ownership by the Somalis of the responsibility for national reconciliation in their country was one of the four principles which the most recent IGAD summit, convened in Djibouti on 25 and 26 November 1996, had endorsed as a guide for the effort to be made to assist the search for national reconciliation in Somalia.

The second principle underlined by the IGAD heads of State and Government focuses on the imperative need to establish a broad-based and all-inclusive government in Somalia. In this regard, it was agreed that efforts and processes aimed at national reconciliation in Somalia should make provisions, in whatever preliminary agreements are reached, for the inclusion of others who, for whatever reason, might not have taken part in the process initially. This, I am happy to note, has been one of the major principles by which the Sodere High-level Consultative Meeting has been guided.

Undoubtedly, the effort for peace and national reconciliation in Somalia requires the all-out support of the international community. Most particularly, when the Somalis show renewed determination to resolve the huge problem they are facing, it will be the obligation of the international community to come to their assistance in whatever way possible, especially in the economic area and in rehabilitating the country. One major way of ensuring the consolidation and strengthening of constituencies for peace in Somalia is through the provision of assistance by the international community to those in Somalia who demonstrate tangible commitment to national reconciliation and to the principle of genuine power-sharing. I believe a major step has been taken in this direction by the High-level Consultative Meeting. In this regard, the launching of an effective programme of assistance for Somalia as an integral component of the peace effort in that country is the third principle underlined by the IGAD heads of State and Government as one of the bases for making progress in bringing about national reconciliation in Somalia.

It would be too much to ask of the Somalis, no matter how much good will they might have, to resolve the accumulated problems they face and to recreate the Somali State that has fallen apart, without the international community contributing its share and without it providing the necessary encouragement for this process in concrete terms.

This hopeful process which is under way and which is a landmark beginning of an obviously difficult road towards the setting-up of a broad-based

Government of Somalia requires for its success the revival of civil society in that country and the growth and expansion of constituencies for peace and national reconciliation. Accordingly, we call for close coordination in this effort between the IGAD countries and the international community.

The IGAD countries are determined to continue their efforts for peace in Somalia on the basis of close coordination and on the basis of the mechanism they have put in place for this purpose. This is the fourth principle that the IGAD countries have agreed to be guided by as they continue their efforts for peace in Somalia. Ethiopia is prepared to continue to do whatever is necessary in discharging the heavy responsibility given to it by the regional countries and by member States of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). I wish to take this opportunity to convey to our Somali brothers the assurances of Prime Minister Meles that Ethiopia will always be behind your efforts for peace and national reconciliation.

It has been said repeatedly that Somalia does not suffer from lack of agreements signed and sealed among the various factions. The problem is one of implementation of those agreements. But we have every reason to believe that we have seen a new spirit at Sodere and during the course of these intensive deliberations of the High-level Consultative Meeting. On the other hand, the Somalis also have justification from their past experience to have doubts with regard to whether the international community will in fact do what is required to assist them effectively so that they can recreate the Somali State. They should not be let down. As far as the Somalis are concerned I am more confident than ever that this spirit will continue and the process of national reconciliation will be deepened and consolidated until a Somali State is created anew, virtually from the ashes wrought by war and by the destruction caused by civil war.

Appendix III

Solemn declaration adopted on 3 January 1997 by the High-level Consultative Meeting of Somali political movements

A. BACKGROUND

We, the undersigned Somali political leaders, meeting at Sodere, Ethiopia, for the period from 22 November 1996 to 3 January 1997, for the High-level Consultative Meeting, having thoroughly discussed the situation in Somalia; being concerned about the continued violence in our country and the senseless loss of human lives in the conflict; having been humbled by our inability so far to arrest the conflict and to ameliorate the condition of life of our people; having realized that the main obstacle to progress in Somalia is the lack of a central authority capable of providing vital public services, including public safety, economic opportunity, and social justice; having further realized that the international community cannot provide adequate assistance to the Somali people without the necessary security in the country and without the institutional mechanisms through which to channel aid; being conscious that the establishment of a central authority requires adequate preparation and a step-by-step approach to ensure political groups and grass-roots participation and acceptance.

Have agreed on the following:

B. THE OUTCOME OF THE HIGH-LEVEL CONSULTATIVE MEETING

At Sodere we have established a National Salvation Council whose forty-one (41) members have been selected from the twenty-six (26) political movements participating in the High-level Consultative Meeting and a National Executive Committee with eleven (11) members led by five (5) member Co-Chairmen with the authority to act and speak on behalf of the National Salvation Council. The National Salvation Council will embark on a preparatory course of action leading to the establishment of a Transitional Central Authority or Provisional Central Government of Somalia and in this connection will pursue a five (5) point programme:

1. To work for the restoration of peace, stability and law and order.

2. To help reconcile the differences among the clans in the zones of conflict and to revive and strengthen the national cohesion of the Somali people so as to ensure the return of a lasting peace and the full participation of political groups in the political decision-making process.

3. To carry out other preparatory programmes including drafting a Transitional National Charter for the Transitional Central Authority and the Provisional Central Government, as well as preparing such other documents as are deemed necessary.

4. To coordinate and facilitate the provision of emergency relief and rehabilitation programmes as well as other social services such as education, health care, environmental protection and the reactivation of the productive sectors.

5. To act as the counterpart to the international community in its efforts to assist in the reconciliation process and the rehabilitation of Somalia.

We have decided to spare no effort to pave the way for the establishment of a Government of national unity as well as the restoration of peace and stability in our country.

C. NATIONAL RECONCILIATION CONFERENCE AND CONCLUDING NATIONAL CONFERENCE

We have also agreed to convene a National Reconciliation Conference at Bossasso, Somalia, to approve the charter of the Transitional Central Authority or the Provisional Central Government. The National Reconciliation Conference will be attended by delegates representing a cross-section of Somali society including elders, intellectuals, women, political and religious leaders. A Concluding National Conference will be convened following the completion of the National Reconciliation Conference to announce the formation of the Transitional Central Authority or the Provisional Central Government in the presence of the representatives of the international community.

D. THE SODERE SPIRIT

The process that culminated in the agreement to set up the National Salvation Council was driven by a new attitude and thinking, which the leaders displayed abundantly during the course of the consultation. The new thinking is based on the realization that the interest of the nation should and must come before and above personal ambition.

What was also evident was the spirit of cooperation and compromise in working out differences and a willingness to forge lasting solutions to the problems that have plagued Somalia in the past six years, as well as the determination to implement the agreement signed at Sodere.

E. A NATIONAL CALL

We wish to affirm to the majority of the Somali people, on whose behalf and by whose mandate we have deliberated at Sodere, that we shall work without any hesitation or reservation for peace and reconciliation to make Somalia a better place to live in. This noble goal can be realized only with the support, participation and cooperation of all Somalis. Thus, we urge them to set aside their differences and to opt for peace and unity.

In the same spirit we call upon the Somali National Movement/Egal political groups to joint with us as soon as possible in the search for a lasting solution to the crises in the country. Similarly, we call upon the Aidid group to participate in the ongoing reconciliation process.

We wish to convey to our compatriots that Somalia can be salvaged and its problems resolved only if its people are united and work together for the common good.

On our part we are prepared to meet with out compatriots at any time and at any place, to enter into dialogue for the purpose of reaching a mutually satisfactory agreement in the best interest of our people.

We welcome and express our full encouragement for all the peace and reconciliation efforts that have been undertaken in the various parts of the country and that have led to the formation and establishment of local authorities.

F. OUR VISION FOR SOMALIA

Taking into account of the fact that the collapse of the national institutions was due in part to structural defects and in part to the mismanagement of previous regimes, we have decided to construct a system of State and form of government that are suitable for our socio-political conditions and realities.

We envisage in this restructuring approach a system of checks and balances ensuring not only the proper functioning of the Government, but also guaranteeing individual liberty and the democratic rights of the citizenry.

Under such a system, propelled and fostered by the Somali people, a new Somalia that is strong, democratic and prosperous can be created.

During this interim period our focus will be on the achievement of reconciliation and the restoration of law and order as well as the preparation of a new constitutional arrangement for Somalia.

G. APPEAL TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

During the course of the Consultative Meeting, two themes have dominated the discussions around the conference table. One theme was the plight of the Somali people, whether at home or abroad, suffering under extremely difficult conditions.

The other theme centred on our failure to bring about any meaningful progress in the fulfilment of our obligations to our people.

However, we have resolved solemnly to pledge our commitment to carry out the terms of the agreements we have signed at Sodere and to discharge our responsibilities to our people.

In this connection, it is self-evident that the rebuilding of Somalia is of such a magnitude as to call for massive international aid in support of reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction. We, therefore, appeal to the international community to continue to provide the necessary assistance while expressing our gratitude to all donor countries for extending humanitarian relief aid to our people.

H. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND EXTENSION OF GRATITUDE

We wish to express our deep appreciation to the Government of Ethiopia as well as the IGAD member countries for providing the facilities to the delegates of the High-level Consultative Meeting without which the conference would not have been possible.

In particular, we would like to thank Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia for his tireless endeavour in promoting peace and reconciliation in Somalia.

We wish also to thank the heads of State of the IGAD countries for their unwavering support of the peace process in Somalia.

Our gratitude goes also to the United Nations and the regional organizations such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the League of Arab States (LAS) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the European Union and the United States of America for their consistent support to Somalia to preserve its unity, national and territorial integrity as well as for their continuing promotion of peace and reconciliation in our country.

Finally we wish to express our deep thanks to all those countries that have provided humanitarian aid to Somali refugees in their respective homelands.

Signed by all the Somali political leaders participating in the High-level Consultative Meeting held at Sodere, Ethiopia

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   (Signed) Mohamed Ramadan Arbow
   Chairman

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